

September 13, 2007

Dear Board of Education Members:

The Kindergarten to College Workgroup held a productive meeting in July. The major outcome of the meeting was that the Workgroup selected three targeted areas seen as most important for moving Montana's education system forward. The three tasks, adopted from a report by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB), were:

1. *Implement a single system for educational data that links all education data systems from pre-kindergarten through higher education.*
(Commissioner's Office will take the lead)
2. *Require essential core courses for all high school students.*
(Office of Public Instruction will take the lead; OPI and OCHE will work together to reach agreement on a set of core courses and/or high school graduation requirements though not necessarily those listed in the SREB report)
3. *Adopt an overarching dual enrollment policy statewide, establishing methods for developing, implementing and monitoring dual enrollment in Montana's postsecondary institutions.*
(Board of Public Education will take the lead)
4. *Set reasonable – but ambitious – annual targets toward meeting the 100 percent graduation goal and provide incentives to schools for meeting them.*
(A lead agency was not appointed because this is not an action item requiring multi-agency participation, and thus will not become one of the three targeted areas of the work group. A future Kindergarten to College meeting will focus on this issue with OPI presenting their annual data report.)

While some modifications will be needed for the language to reflect what is right for Montana, the workgroup went through a unique selection process to choose these three areas to focus on. For each action item, an agency was chosen to take the lead and will be responsible for ensuring that the work gets done.

I have asked the workgroup's Vice Chair, Janine Pease, to report to you on the latest meeting. I have also included a summary packet which details the selection process that the workgroup went through and I look forward to feedback from the Board of Education on these three targeted areas. Again, the purpose of the Kindergarten to College Workgroup is to assist the Board of Education in meeting deliverables and completing the Governor's Homework Assignments. I believe that consensus from the Workgroup and the Board of Education on these three targeted areas along with choosing an agency to take the lead in each area will help ensure that we meet our goals.

Warmly,

Erin Williams
Workgroup Chair